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HONOUR ***the BRAVE***



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HONOUR THE BRAVE

WITH A DEEP SWELLING ROAR, NINE BOSTON FIGHTER-BOMBERS TOOK OFF FROM THEIR DESERT AIRFIELD NEAR THE BORDERS OF TRIPOLITANIA. THEY WERE A CLOSE-SUPPORT SQUADRON OF THE TACTICAL AIR FORCE, THEIR JOB TO BACK UP THE ARMY IN AN ATTACK THAT WAS JUST STARTING. BUT ONE HAZARD STOOD IN THE BOMBERS' PATH - THEY WERE TAKING OFF INTO AN APPROACHING SANDSTORM.

THE MET. TYPES SAY WE CAN GET ABOVE IT IN TIME... BUT WE'LL HAVE TO CLIMB FAST TO DO IT!



Chapter 1. Stormy Passage

PILOTING ONE OF THE BOSTONS WAS FLIGHT LIEUTENANT BARRY PLUMMET, COOL AND UNFLURRIED IN MOMENTS OF DANGER, BARRY FLEW HIS PLANES BY INSTINCT AND HIS SENSE OF TOUCH AS MUCH AS BY THE INSTRUMENTS ON THE PANEL BEFORE HIM. HE WAS A FIRST CLASS PILOT.

WE'RE GOING RIGHT INTO IT! CAN'T YOU CLIMB ANY FASTER, SKIPPER?

WE'RE AT MAXIMUM REVS NOW! BUT WE MUST GET THROUGH—WE'VE GOT TO KEEP OUR DATE WITH THE EIGHTH ARMY!

FORTY MILES AWAY, THE INFANTRY WERE STARTING THEIR ADVANCE TOWARDS A STRONGLY HELD GERMAN POSITION. ONE OF THE COMPANY COMMANDERS WAS MAJOR PETER WARNFORD, A DESERT VETERAN...

THE AIR FORCE WALLAHS ARE LATE! I CAN'T BEAR INEFFICIENCY, SERGEANT-MAJOR.



THE ATTACK HAD BEEN WORKED OUT TO A STRICT TIMETABLE... BY THE TIME THE "SOFTENING-UP" STRIKE BY THE BOSTONS WAS DUE, THE INFANTRY WERE ALREADY MOVING UP TO THEIR START LINE.

I NEVER LIKED THIS IDEA OF CO-OPERATION WITH THE AIR FORCE. IT GIVES US NO DIRECT CONTROL! GIVE ME A FIELD-REGIMENT OF GUNNERS, ANY DAY!

YES, SIR!



THE INFANTRY COMPANIES, SOON ADVANCING OVER OPEN GROUND, STILL SAW NO SIGN OF THE CLOSE-SUPPORT PLANES. BUT IN THE DESERT SKY BEHIND THEM THERE WAS AN OMINOUS YELLOW HAZE.

STILL NO SIGN OF 'EM, SIR... LOOKS LIKE A SANDSTORM'S BEHIND US.



THE ARMY HAS TO FIGHT IN ALL WEATHERS - SO SHOULD THEY!

WITH A DEAFENING CRACK, A GERMAN EIGHTY-EIGHT M.M. SHELL LANDED CLOSE TO A BRITISH TANK. IT WAS THE SIGNAL FOR THE START OF A WITHERING BURST OF FIRE FROM THE GERMANS...



STILL THE BRITISH PRESSED HOME THE ATTACK. BUT, WITHOUT THE EXPECTED AIR SUPPORT, IT WAS DOOMED TO FAILURE. PETER WARNFORD LED HIS DEPLETED COMPANY ON, DISPLAYING GREAT COURAGE.

KEEP GOING,
MEN - AT ALL
COSTS!



BUT SEVERE CASUALTIES WERE SUFFERED BEFORE THE ATTACK WAS FINALLY CALLED OFF. BITTERLY, THE INFANTRY BEGAN TO WITHDRAW UNDER ITS OWN COVERING FIRE.

KEEP FIRING WHILE THEY GET THE WOUNDED AWAY!



THE CLOSE-SUPPORT SQUADRON OF BOSTONS HAD SUFFERED HEAVY CASUALTIES ITSELF, IN TRYING TO FLY THROUGH THE SANDSTORM. TWO PLANES HAD LOST CONTROL AND CRASHED... THREE OTHERS HAD MADE FORCED LANDINGS...



ONLY TWO OF THE PLANES GOT THROUGH, ONE OF THEM BARRY PLUMMET'S. BUT THEY HAD LOST THEIR WAY, AND ARRIVED OVER THE SCENE FIFTEEN MINUTES TOO LATE. BY THAT TIME, THE ABORTIVE ATTACK WAS OVER.

HERE THEY COME, TOO LATE TO HELP... AND ONLY TWO OF THE PERISHERS!

TYPICAL AIR FORCE SHOW, SAR'NT... YOU CAN'T RELY ON THOSE FELLOWS...

BARRY AND HIS FELLOW - PILOT MADE A TOKEN STRIKE ON THE GERMANS, SWEEPING LOW OVER THE LINES AND RIDDLING THEM WITH MACHINE - GUN FIRE. IT WAS ALL THEY COULD DO NOW...

OBVIOUSLY, THE KHAKI TYPES HAVE CALLED OFF THEIR ATTACK... BUT WE CAN HELP COVER THEIR RETREAT.

IF THEY'D USED THEIR HEADS, THEY WOULDN'T HAVE STAGED AN ATTACK IN A SANDSTORM AND EXPECTED HELP FROM US. TYPICAL ARMY SHOW, THOUGH - BONEHEADED!

BY THE TIME THE BRITISH UNITS HAD COMPLETED THEIR WITHDRAWAL, PETER WARNFORD WAS HIMSELF A CASUALTY. WHEN HIS COLONEL SAW HIM, PETER WAS A BITTER, UNREASONABLE MAN...



PETER'S WOUNDS TOOK SOME TIME TO HEAL AND HE WAS SENT HOME, TO RETURN TO HIS REGIMENTAL DEPOT AS AN INSTRUCTOR.



BUT HIS SMOULDERING GRUDGE AGAINST THE AIR FORCE REMAINED...

Chapter 2. *The Flying Soldiers*

ONE DAY, SOME MONTHS LATER AT HIS DEPOT IN OXFORDSHIRE, PETER WARNFORD SAW A STRANGE SIGHT CROSSING THE SKY. . .

WHAT THE HECK'S THAT?
AND WHERE ARE THE
ENGINES ON THE
SECOND PLANE?

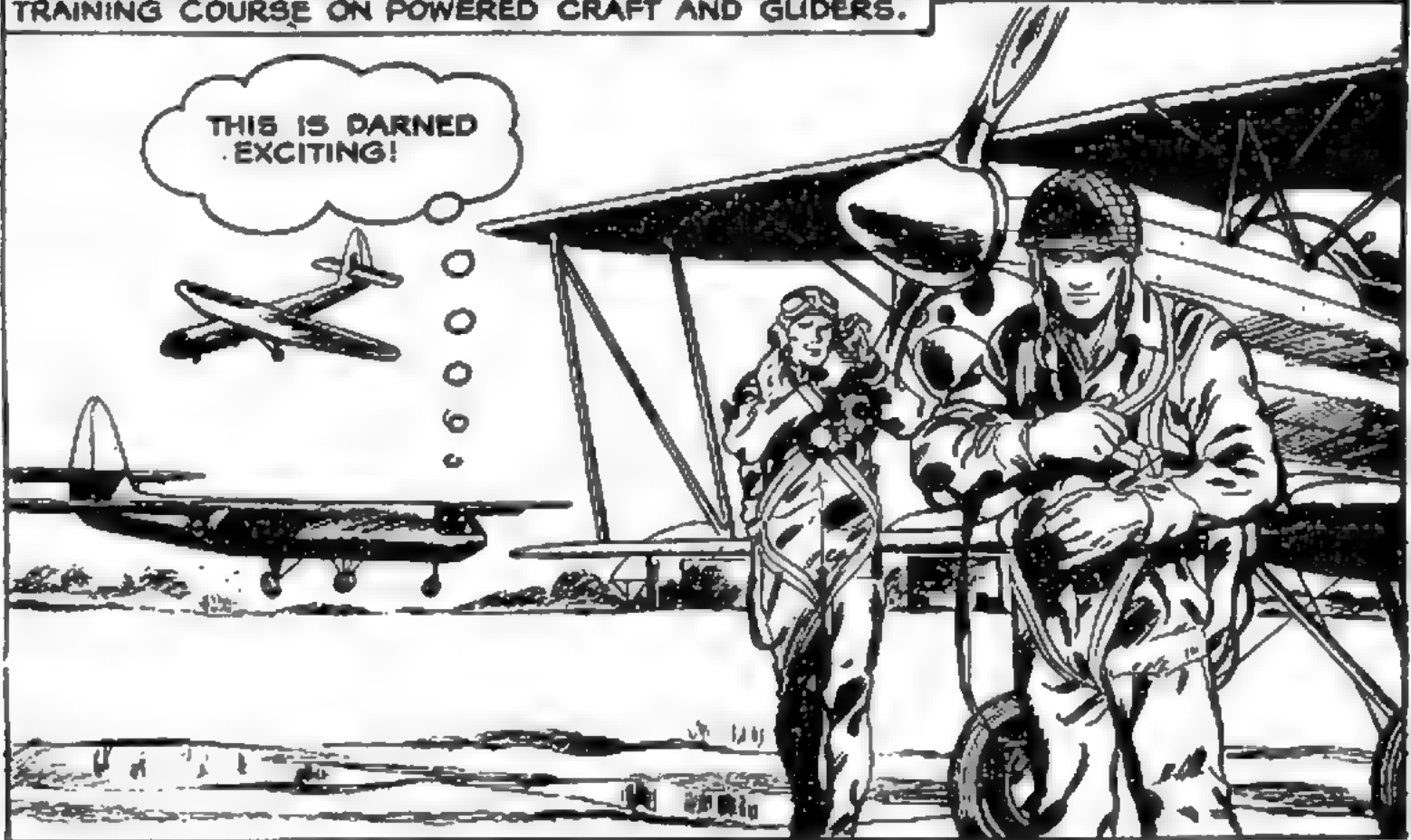
IT'S NO PLANE,
PETER. IT'S ONE OF
THE NEW MILITARY GLIDERS.
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD, PETER?
THEY'RE FORMING A
GLIDER PILOT REGIMENT.

PETER HAD HEARD ALL ABOUT PARATROOPERS. BUT THIS WAS THE FIRST HE HAD HEARD ABOUT THE ARMY'S SCHEME TO LAND ASSAULT TROOPS IN THE FIELD BY GLIDERS. . .

THEY'RE ASKING FOR
VOLUNTEERS, PETER. THE
NEW REGIMENT'S MOTTO IS,
"NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE".

SOUNDS INTERESTING,
FREDDIE. I THINK I'LL
LOOK INTO IT. . .

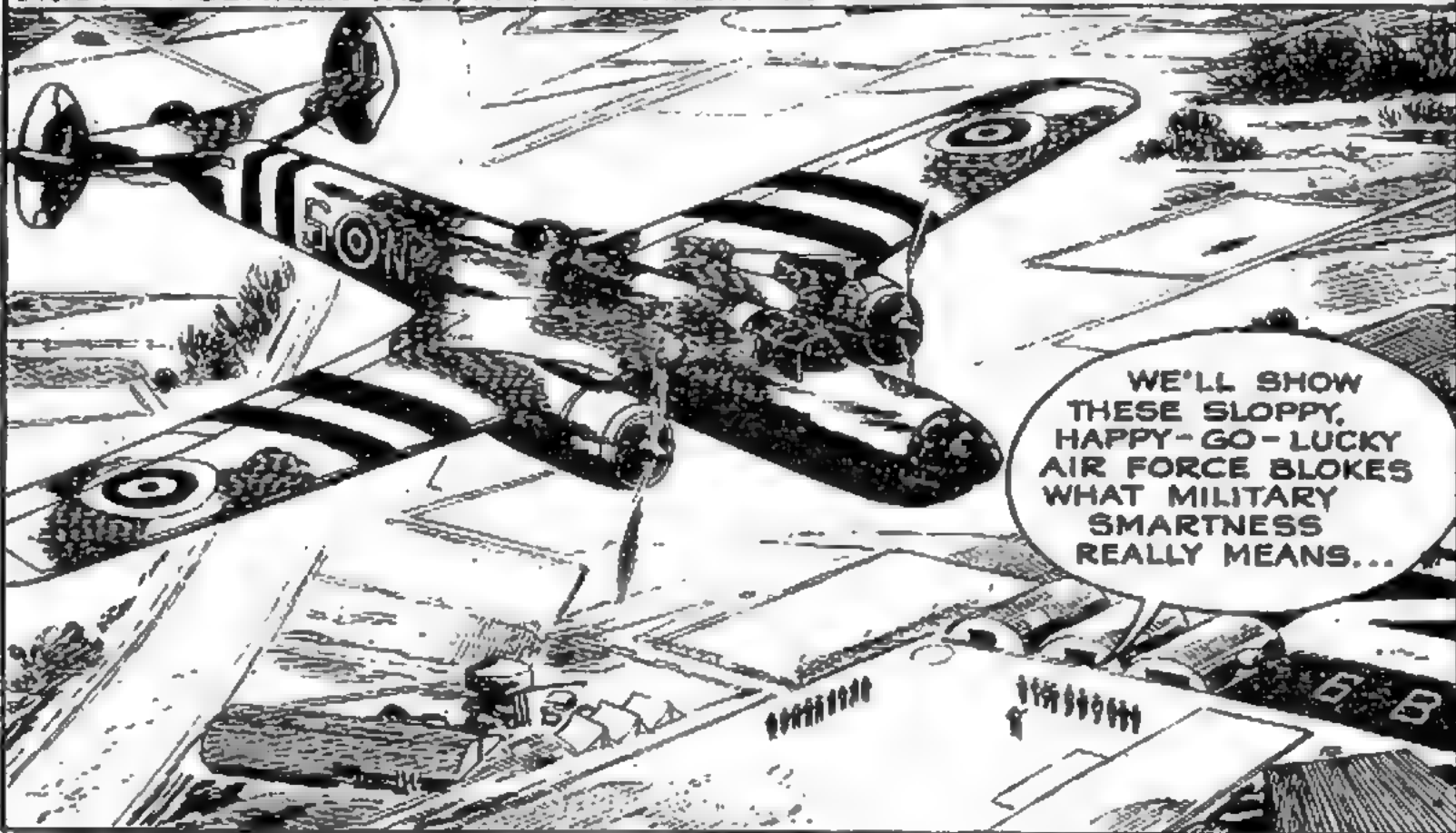
PETER WARNFORD WAS TYPICAL OF THE TOUGH, FEARLESS FIGHTING MEN WHO VOLUNTEERED TO JOIN THE GLIDER PILOT REGIMENT. HE BEGAN AN INTENSIVE TRAINING COURSE ON POWERED CRAFT AND GLIDERS.



BUT THERE WAS ALSO A GRUELLING COURSE OF MILITARY TRAINING FOR THE VOLUNTEERS...



FOR THE WHOLE OF THE TRAINING COURSE, AIR FORCE AND ARMY PERSONNEL WERE WORKING TOGETHER ON THE SAME STATION. INEVITABLY, THERE WAS FRICTION BETWEEN THEM, FOR THEIR METHODS WERE VERY DIFFERENT.



WE'LL SHOW THESE SLOPPY, HAPPY-GO-LUCKY AIR FORCE BLOKES WHAT MILITARY SMARTNESS REALLY MEANS...

THE SOLDIERS, PROUD OF THEIR TRADITIONAL MILITARY DISCIPLINE, WERE DETERMINED TO OUTSHINE THEIR OPPOSITE NUMBERS. THE MORE EASY-GOING AIRMEN LOOKED WITH DISTASTE ON ALL THE MILITARY PARADING...



FALL OUT IN PAIRS. EMPLANE IN YOUR GLIDERS.

THESE SQUADDIES MAKE A PARADE GROUND CAPER OF EVERYTHING...

SOME MUTUAL ANTAGONISM HAD BEEN EXPECTED... THE WHOLE PROJECT WAS STILL EXPERIMENTAL. SENIOR OFFICERS ON BOTH SIDES MADE ALLOWANCES FOR THE FEW INTER-SERVICE QUARRELS...

OUR CHAPS ARE SHAKING DOWN PRETTY WELL TOGETHER.

PERHAPS NEWS OF THE OUTCOME OF THE SICILY GLIDER LANDINGS WILL HELP MORALE...



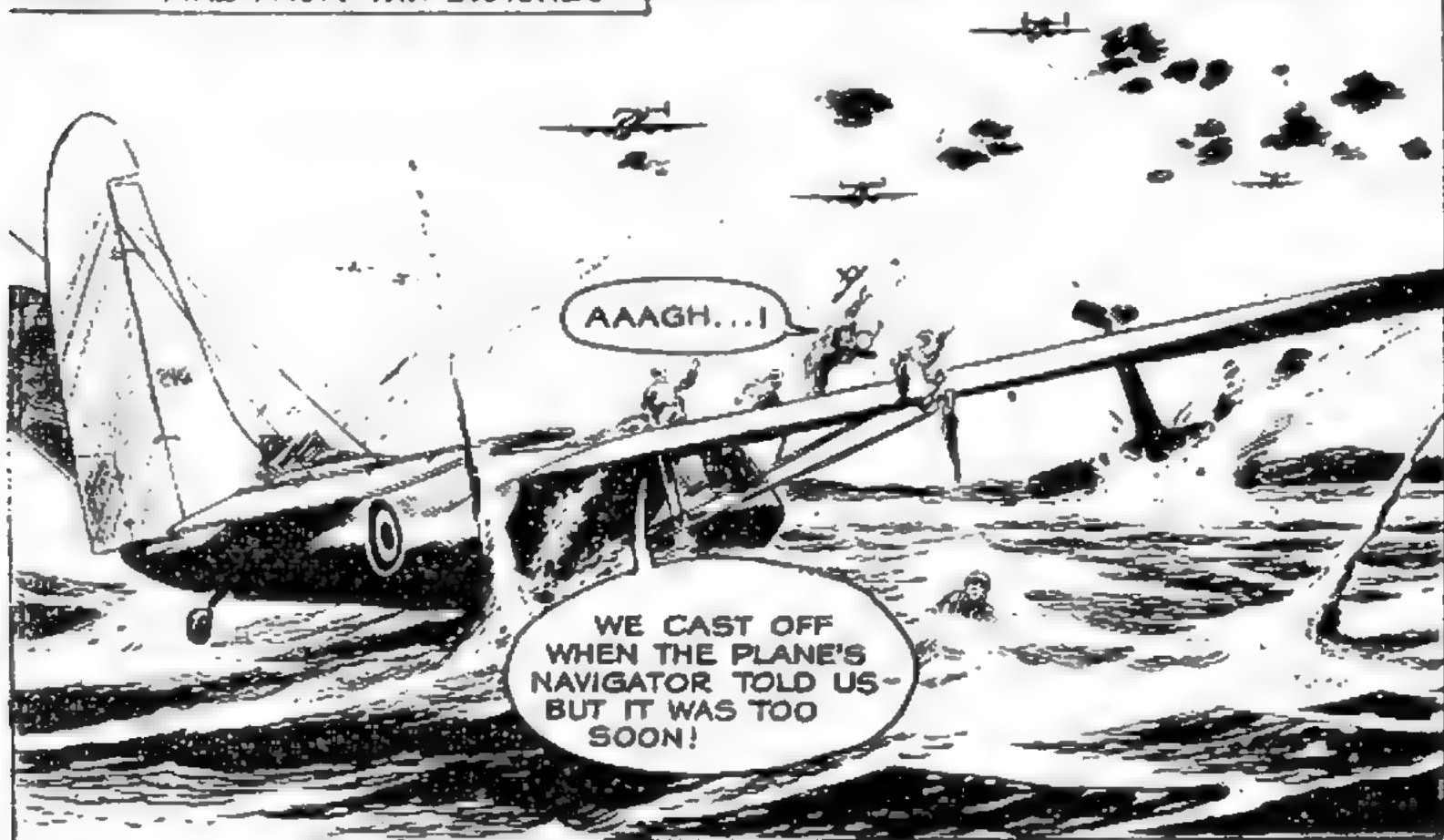
BUT IN FACT, THE FIRST OPERATIONAL LANDINGS BY TRAINED GLIDER TROOPS, AS PART OF THE SICILY INVASION, DID NOT PROVE TO BE AN UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS.

DOWN TO FIVE HUNDRED... WE'RE DROPPING TOO FAST, SIR!

YOU'RE RIGHT! WE'LL NEVER MAKE THE COAST.

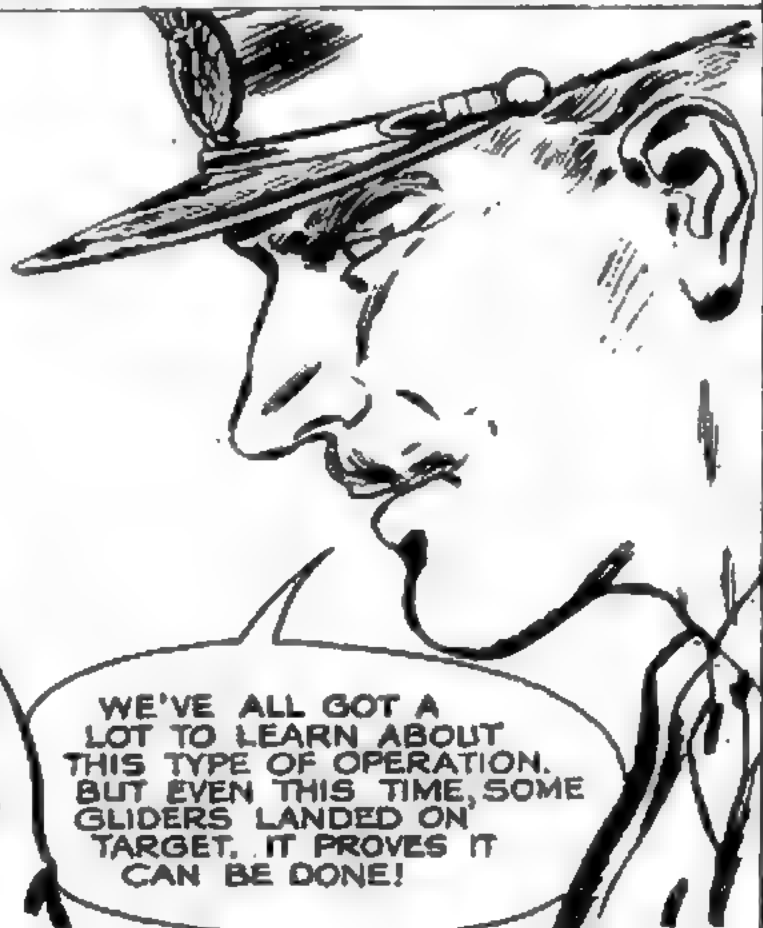


MANY OF THE WACO GLIDERS DROPPED SHORT INTO THE SEA, TO COME UNDER DEADLY FIRE FROM THE BEACHES.

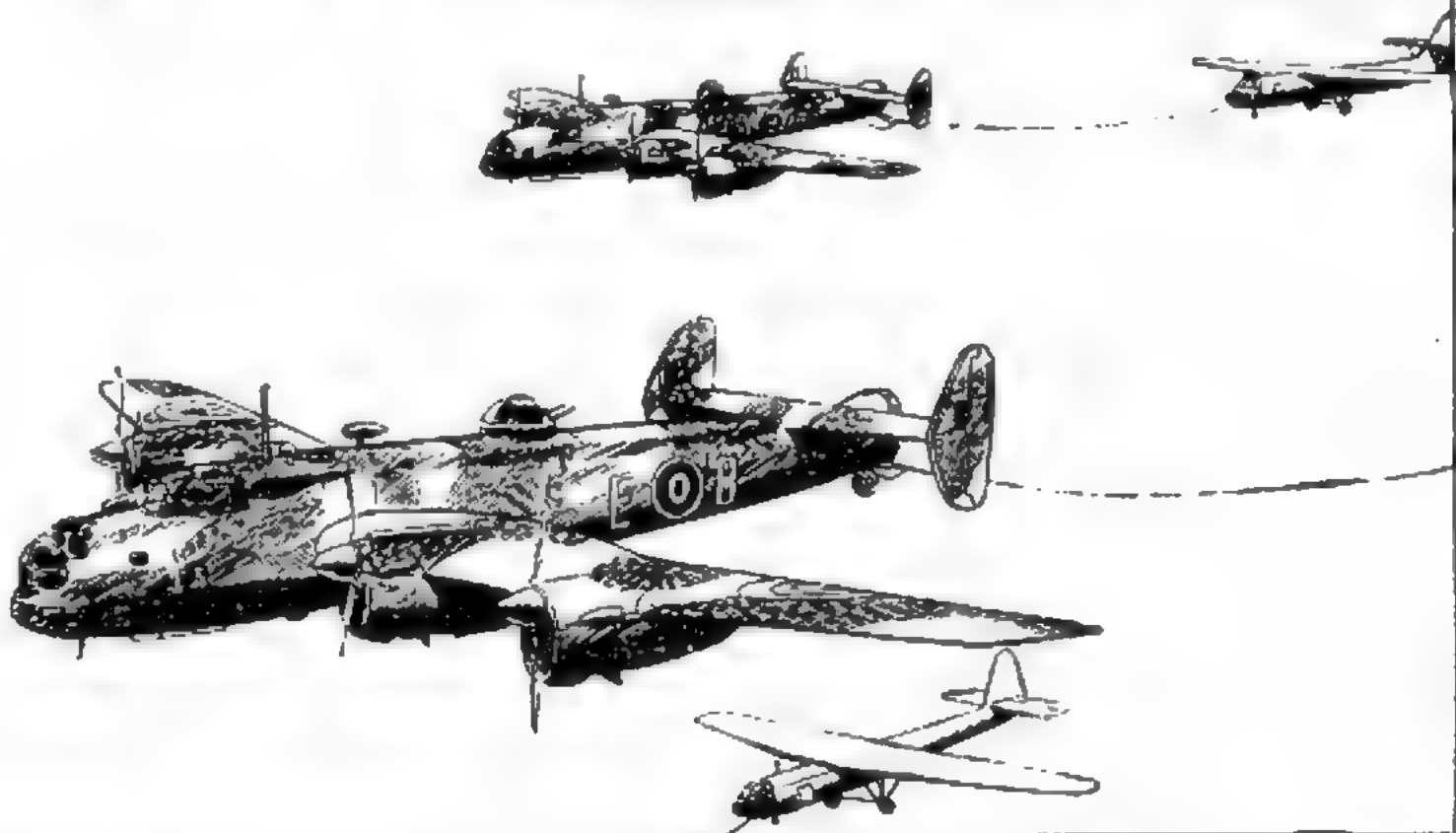


IN FACT, THE FAULT HAD BEEN DUE TO NO HUMAN ERRORS, CARELESSNESS, OR LACK OF COURAGE. NO ONE COULD HAVE FORESEEN THE EXTRAORDINARY ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS WHICH PREVAILED THAT DAY IN THAT PART OF THE MEDITERRANEAN...

IT WAS THE UNEXPECTED COOLING OF THE AIR OVER THE COAST OF SICILY - THAT'S WHAT MADE THE GLIDERS LOSE HEIGHT SO RAPIDLY.



THE TRAINING OF THE VOLUNTEER PILOTS, LIKE MAJOR PETER WARNFORD, CONTINUED. SOON THEY WERE TEAMED UP WITH THE R.A.F. "TUG" CREWS, WHO WERE TO TOW THEM INTO ACTION.



FLYING THE TUGS WAS STRANGE WORK FOR THE R.A.F. PILOTS. MANY HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED FROM BOMBER COMMAND AND ONE OF THESE WAS BARRY PLUMMET, PROMOTED TO SQUADRON LEADER.



OF ALL THE QUARRELS THAT SURVIVED BETWEEN THE MEN OF THE TWO SERVICES, THE MOST BITTER WAS BETWEEN BARRY AND PETER BY A COINCIDENCE THAT NEITHER OF THEM RELISHED THEY WERE NOW TEAMED UP TOGETHER.



ERRORS AND ACCIDENTS WERE UNAVOIDABLE IN TRAINING, BUT IF ANYTHING WENT WRONG BETWEEN BARRY AND PETER, THEIR USUAL COOLNESS TO EACH OTHER BECAME A FIRST-CLASS ROW...



ANY BAD PRACTICE LANDING WOULD TRIGGER OFF A VIOLENT ARGUMENT BETWEEN THEM. THEY WERE EQUIVALENT IN RANK, AND NEITHER WOULD GIVE GROUND...

WE'RE SIMPLY NOT WORKING BY THE BOOK, PLUMMET - I'M IN CHARGE OF THE GLIDER AND I GIVE THE ORDERS!

YOU'VE GOT TO REALISE, WARNFORD, THAT IN THE AIR WE WORK AS A TEAM - NOT AS INDIVIDUALS!

YOU FLYING CHAPS HAVE NO DISCIPLINE, THAT'S THE TROUBLE! YOU SLEEP IN SOFT BEDS EVERY NIGHT, WHILE WE SOLDIERS LIVE IN DITCHES.

THAT'S WHERE YOU BELONG, YOU BUNCH OF CLUELESS CRUISEERS!

THEIR HEATED QUARREL GREW MORE BITTER AS THE LONG MONTHS OF TRAINING WENT ON. BUT FINALLY, THE LONG-AWAITED DAY ARRIVED - THEY WERE TO SEE ACTION!

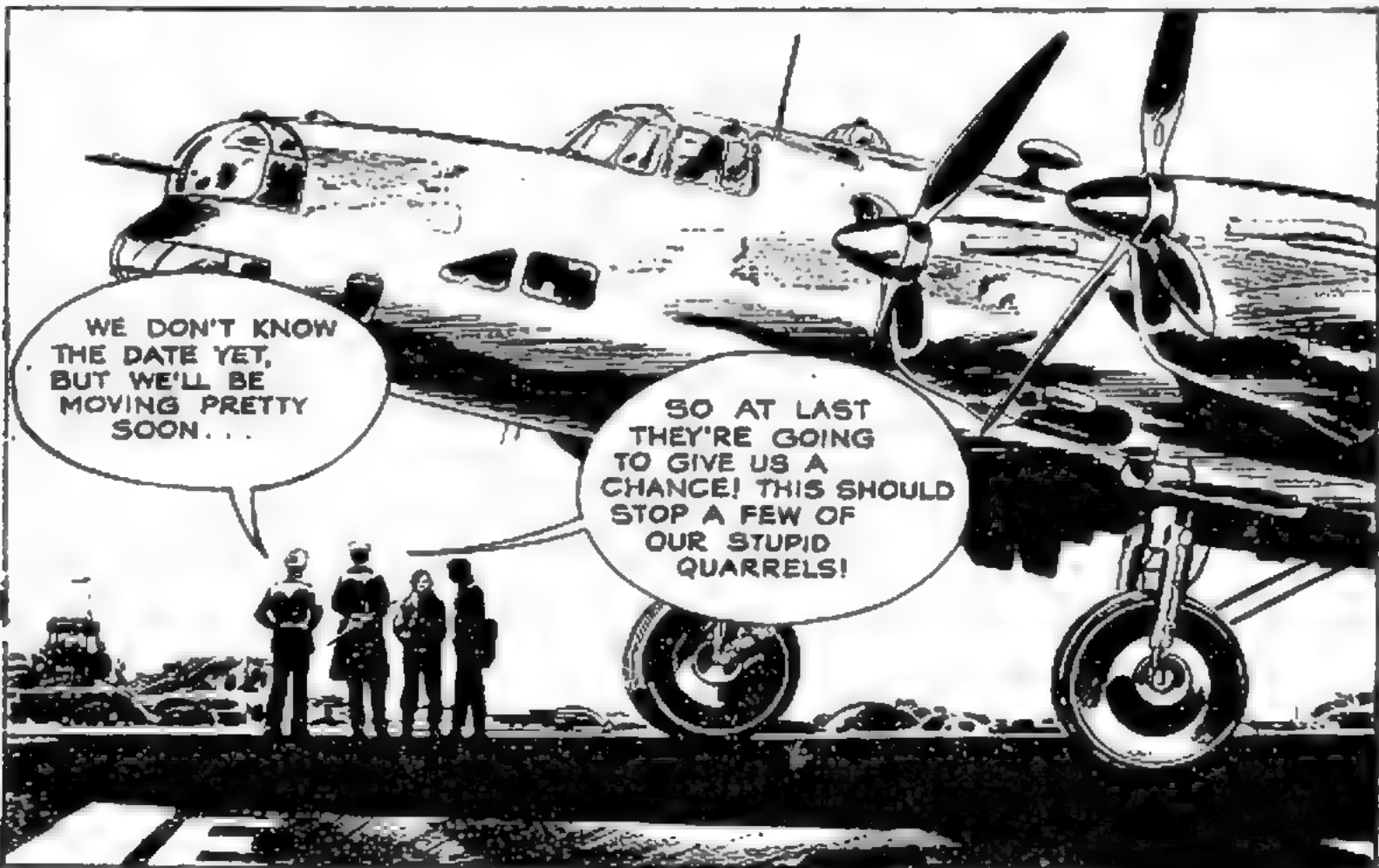
BREAK IT UP,
YOU TWO! WE'RE
SUPPOSED TO BE
FIGHTING THE JERRIES -
NOT EACH OTHER!

HAVE YOU CHAPS
HEARD? WE'RE
SPEARHEADING THE
INVASION!



WE DON'T KNOW
THE DATE YET,
BUT WE'LL BE
MOVING PRETTY
SOON...

SO AT LAST
THEY'RE GOING
TO GIVE US A
CHANCE! THIS SHOULD
STOP A FEW OF
OUR STUPID
QUARRELS!




Chapter 3. *The Callous Hero*

ON THE MORNING OF THE 6TH JUNE, 1944, A GREAT AIR ARMADA DRONED STEADILY OUT OVER THE CHANNEL... THE FIRST AIR LANDING TROOPS HAD GONE IN BEFORE DAYBREAK. THIS WAS THE SECOND REINFORCEMENT WAVE. IT INCLUDED BARRY AND PETER.




SO FAR,
SO GOOD.

SUDDENLY, AS THEY CROSSED THE ENEMY COAST, THEY RAN INTO A THICK FLAK BARRAGE. PETER COULD GET NO RESPONSE FROM HIS TUG PILOT ON THE INTERCOM. . .



CONFOUND IT - NOW THE
INTERCOM WITH THE TUG'S
PACKED UP. IF ANYTHING
GOES WRONG WITH THOSE
CHAPS IN FRONT, THEY
CAN'T TELL US!

MEANWHILE, BARRY PLUMMET, PILOTING THE HALIFAX, WAS EQUALLY CONCERNED BY HIS LACK OF CONTACT WITH THE MEN IN THE GLIDER BEHIND.



THE TELEPHONE CABLES GONE FOR A BURTON! ARE THEY ALL RIGHT BACK THERE, REAR GUNNER?



ALL RIGHT, SKIPPER...

SUDDENLY THE CREW FELT THE WHOLE HALIFAX SHUDDER, AS AN EIGHTY-EIGHT MILLIMETRE SHELL BURST UNDER THE FORWARD PART OF THE FUSELAGE.



BLAZES!
WHAT WAS THAT?

THERE WAS NO FIRE FROM THE EXPLOSION. BUT THE HEAVY BOMBER SUDDENLY LURCHED OFF TO STARBOARD AND THE PILOT FOUND THE CONTROL COLUMN LOOSE AND USELESS IN HIS HANDS.



WHAT'S HAPPENED?
WE'RE VEERING OFF
COURSE, SKIPPER.

THE BOTTOM OF
THE CONTROL COLUMN'S
SNAPPED, I CAN'T
DO A THING!

IMMEDIATELY, BARRY THOUGHT OF THE GLIDER BEHIND. IT WAS STILL IN TOW, AND THERE WAS NO MEANS OF CONTACTING ITS PILOT OVER THE FAULTY TELEPHONE CABLE.



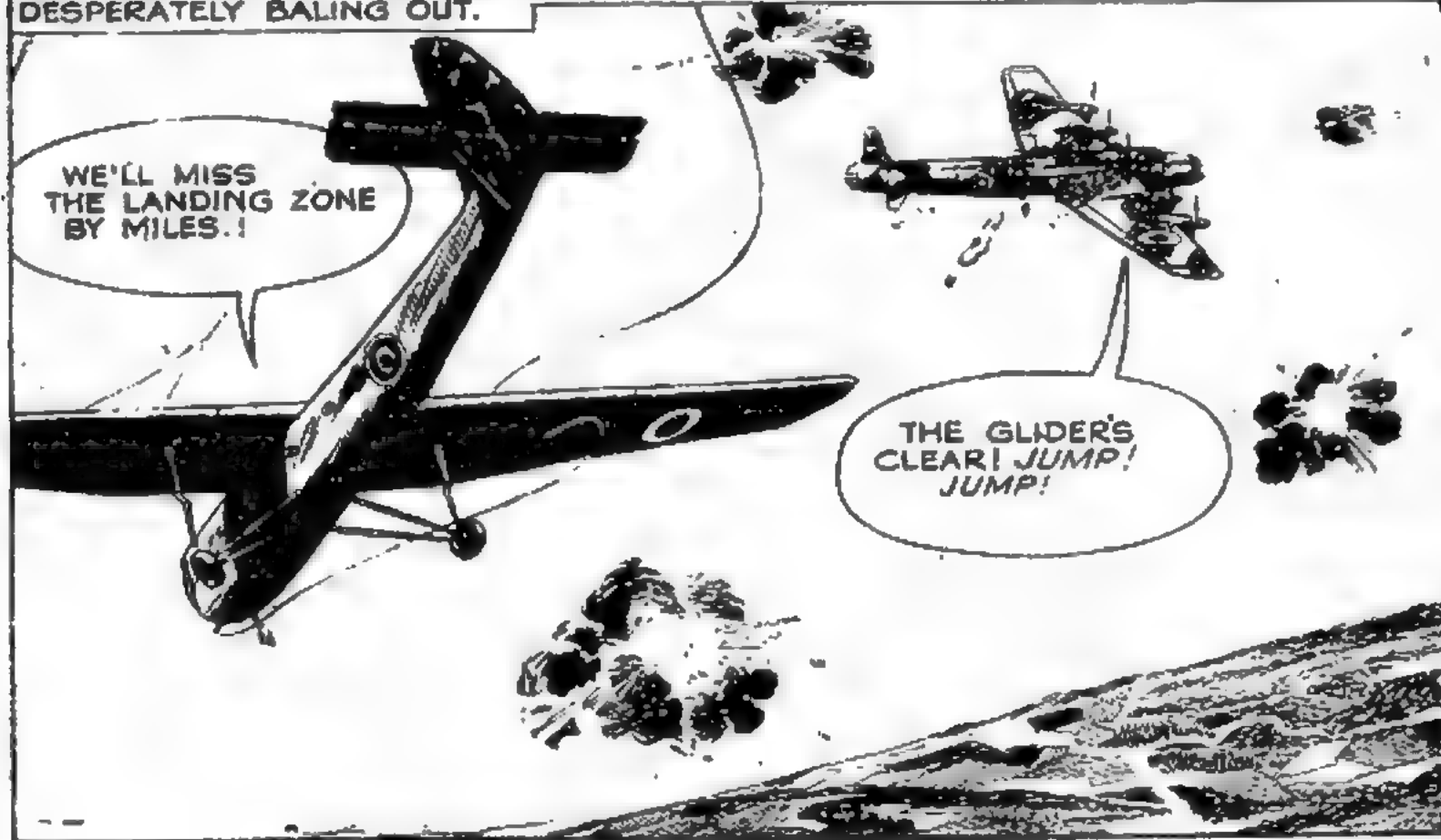
THE GLIDER
TYPES HAVEN'T
CAST OFF YET,
SKIPPER...

FOR PETE'S
SAKE, PULL THE
GLIDER RELEASE, OR
WE'LL PULL 'EM
INTO THE GROUND.
EVERYBODY JUMP
FOR IT ONCE
THE GLIDER'S
CLEAR.

FROM THE GLIDER ITSELF, IT WAS NOT APPARENT THAT THE TUG PLANE WAS MORTALLY DAMAGED. THE GLIDER TROOPS SAW THE HALIFAX TURN SHARPLY TO STARBOARD, THEN JETTISON THE TOW ROPE...



PETER AND HIS MEN WERE NOW ADRIFT BEFORE THEIR TIME! AS THE HORRIFIED CO-PILOT COUNTED DOWN THE FAST-FALLING ALTITUDE, NONE OF THEM SAW THE STRICKEN HALIFAX TURNING AWAY OUT OF CONTROL, AND ALL ITS CREW DESPERATELY BALING OUT.



AS THE GLIDER WENT RUSHING DOWN TOWARDS THE EARTH, PETER PUT ON FULL FLAP TO REDUCE SPEED AND HELD BACK ON HIS STICK...



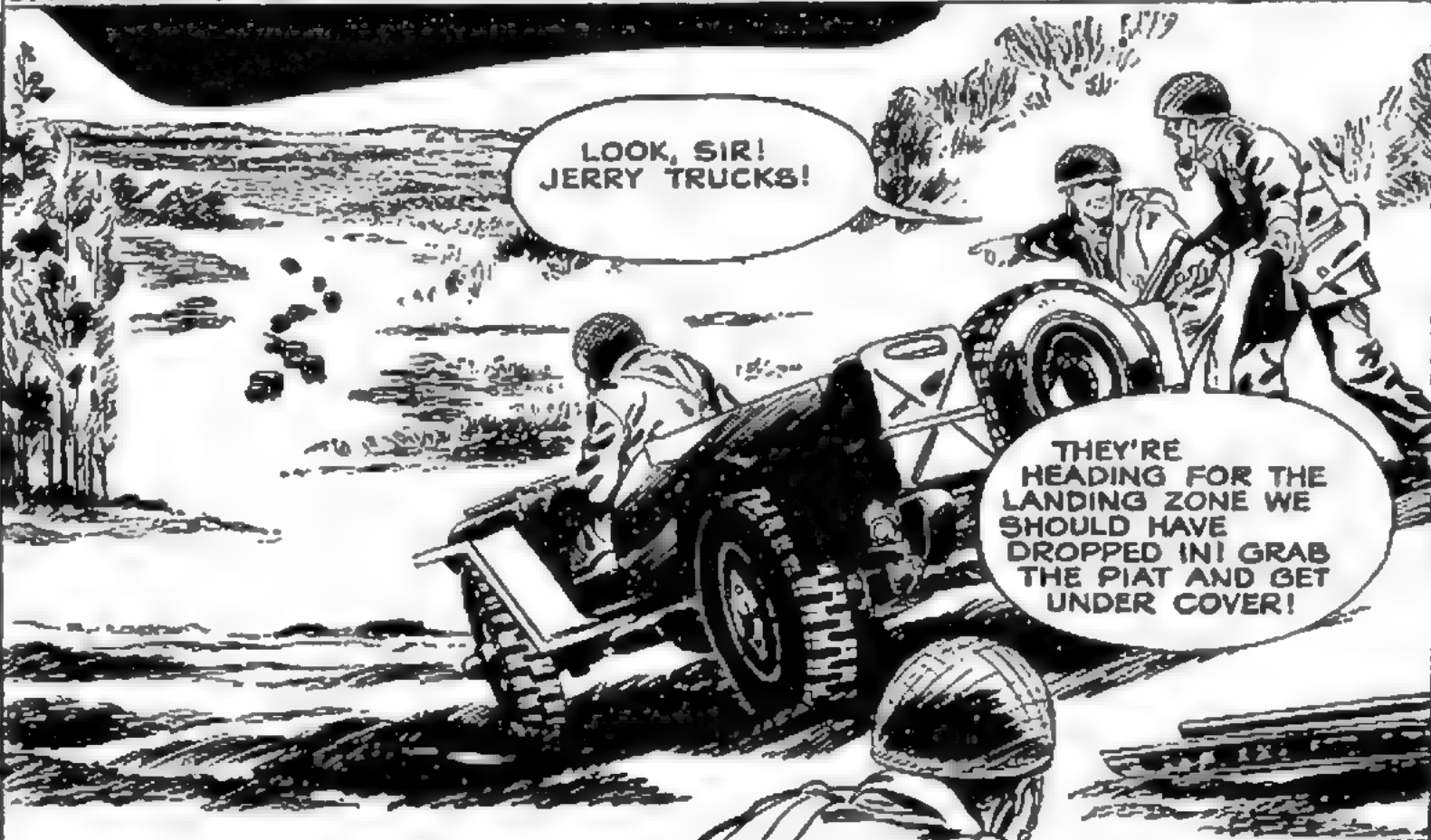
THE NEXT MOMENT, THEY SWEEPED IN BETWEEN SOME TREES AT SIXTY MILES PER HOUR.

IT WAS A GOOD LANDING. IN SECONDS, THE OCCUPANTS OF THE GLIDER WERE BREAKING OPEN THE TAIL UNIT - AND PULLING OUT THE JEEP THEY HAD ON BOARD.

GET CRACKING! WE'VE GOT A JEEP AND A PIAT! WE'RE STILL A FIGHTING UNIT - EVEN IF THOSE AIR FORCE BLIGHTERS HAVE DITCHED US.



FORTUNATELY THEY WERE CLOSE TO A ROAD, JUST AS THEY HAD GOT THE JEEP READY, THEY SAW A CONVOY OF VEHICLES APPROACHING.



WELL TRAINED, THE TROOPS REACTED INSTANTLY...



PETER WAITED UNTIL THE LEADING GERMAN VEHICLE HAD APPROACHED TO WITHIN POINT-BLANK RANGE. THEN HIS VOICE BELLOWS OUT...



THE GERMANS WERE TAKEN COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE. IN A FEW MINUTES, THE PIAT HAD TWO VEHICLES IN FLAMES. NOW THE ROAD WAS BLOCKED BY THEIR BURNING HULKS AND THE CONVOY WAS IN A STATE OF CHAOS AND CONFUSION.



BUT SOON THE GERMANS BEGAN TO RECOVER THEMSELVES, AS THEY REALISED THAT THE OPPOSITION WAS ONLY A SMALL FORCE OF BRITISH SOLDIERS...



PETER DECIDED THAT IT WOULD BE SUICIDAL TO STAY LONGER.



THE ENGINE OF THE JEEP ROARED INTO LIFE. PETER THREW A COUPLE OF GRENADES TO KEEP THE ENEMY BUSY WHILE HE AND THE LAST MAN MADE A DASH FOR IT.



SOON THEY WERE RACING UP THE ROAD AWAY FROM THE GERMANS. ONE OF THEIR NUMBER HAD ALREADY BEEN SHOT, AND NOW THE GLIDER CO-PILOT SLUMPED BACK, BADLY WOUNDED.

WE'VE ALREADY LOST HOSKINS, SIR!... NOW SERGEANT PETTIGREW'S BEEN HIT!

WE'VE GOT TO KEEP GOING OR WE'LL ALL BE DEAD SOON!

THEIR BRIEF ACTION HAD LASTED ONLY A FEW MINUTES. SUDDENLY, AS THEY HURTTLED ALONG THE ROAD, THEY SAW SOME PARACHUTES SPREAD OUT ON THE GRASS OF A MEADOW. APPROACHING THEM WERE FIGURES IN FIELD GREY GERMAN UNIFORMS!

LOOK, SIR! SOME OF OUR CHAPS HAVE COME DOWN BY PARACHUTE.


AND THOSE JERRIES HAVE SPOTTED 'EM AS WELL!

QUICKLY, PETER DROVE THE JEEP OFF THE ROAD TO HIDE IT IN THE SHADOW OF SOME TREES. FROM THERE, HE WATCHED THE PARACHUTISTS THROUGH HIS BINOCULARS.

THE
JERRIES ARE
ROUNDING
THEM UP!



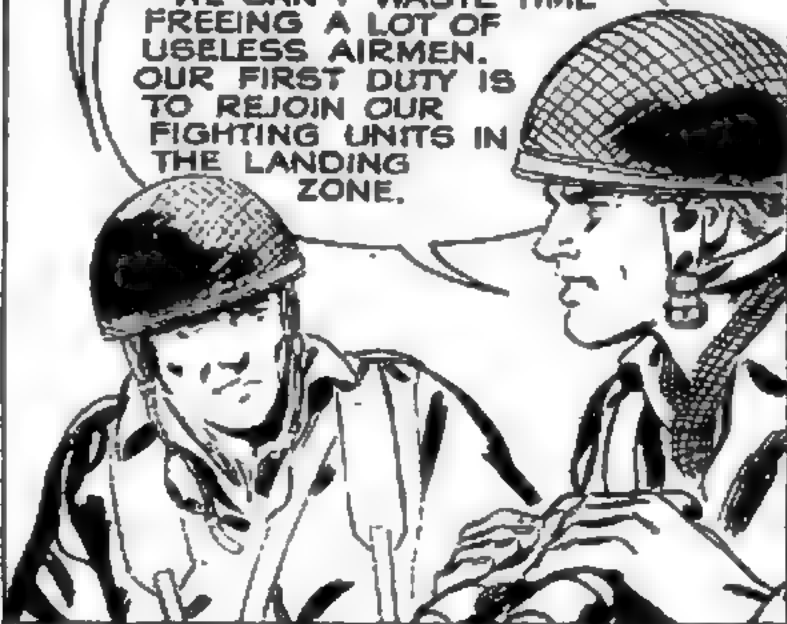
GREAT SCOTT!
IT'S PLUMMET AND
OUR TUG CREW...
THE JERRIES ARE
LOCKING THEM UP - TO
AWAIT INTERROGATION,
I SUPPOSE.



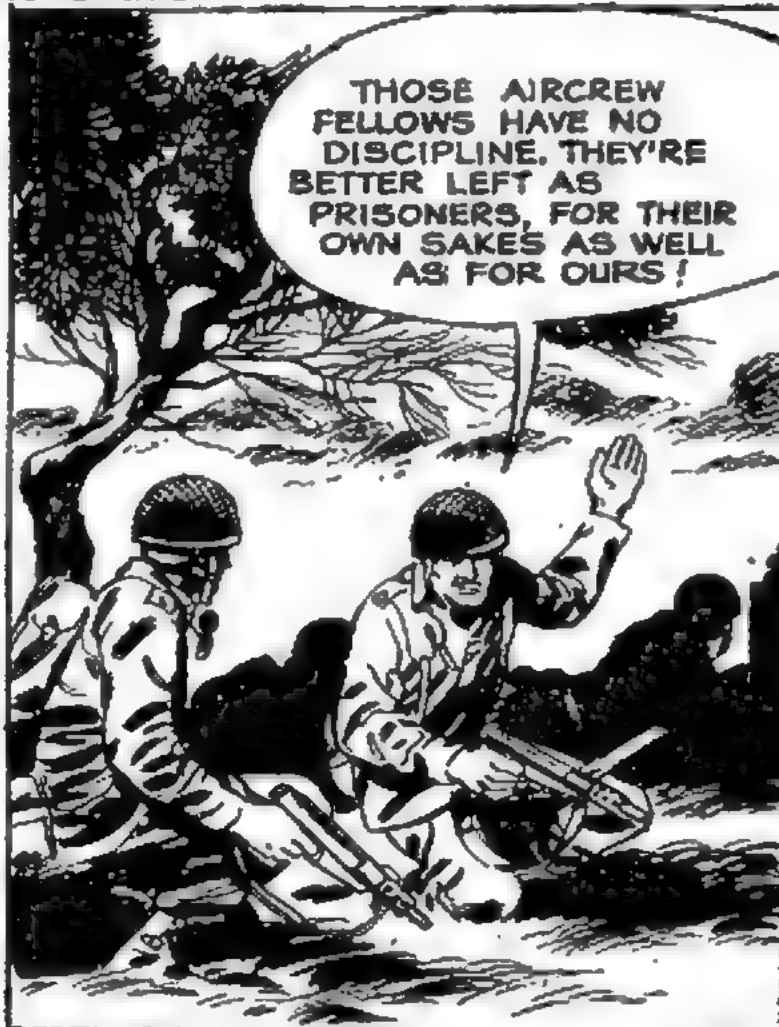
ONE OF THE TROOPS SPOKE UP EXCITEDLY AS HE SAW THE GERMANS WALK OFF...

THE JERRIES HAVEN'T EVEN LEFT A GUARD ON THE DOOR... WE CAN LET THE AIR FORCE BLOKES OUT, SIR!

WE CAN'T WASTE TIME FREEING A LOT OF USELESS AIRMEN. OUR FIRST DUTY IS TO REJOIN OUR FIGHTING UNITS IN THE LANDING ZONE.



THOSE AIRCREW FELLOWS HAVE NO DISCIPLINE. THEY'RE BETTER LEFT AS PRISONERS, FOR THEIR OWN SAKES AS WELL AS FOR OURS!



PETER STARTED UP THE JEEP... IN A MOMENT THEY WERE ON THE MOVE AGAIN.

ANYONE ELSE WOULD HAVE LET THOSE AIRCREW BLOKES FREE... BUT THE MAJOR'S GOT A CHIP ON HIS SHOULDER ABOUT THE AIR FORCE...



Honour The Brave

BARRY PLUMMET AND HIS CAPTURED CREW HAD SEEN THE MEN IN THE JEEP FROM THE WINDOW OF THEIR TEMPORARY PRISON. FOR A MOMENT, THEY THOUGHT THE SOLDIERS WERE COMING TO THEIR RESCUE.



IT'S THE GLIDER TYPES IN THEIR JEEP, SKIPPER... THEY MUST KNOW WE'RE HERE.

FOR PETE'S SAKE DON'T WAVE TO THEM IT'LL GIVE THEM AWAY TO THE JERRIES!

BUT WHEN PETER AND HIS MEN SUDDENLY DROVE OFF AT HIGH SPEED, THE HOPES OF THE CAPTURED AIRCREW WERE DASHED...



GOOD GRIEF! THEY'RE GOING TO LEAVE US IN THE BAG, AFTER ALL!


THE MISERABLE LOT OF PERISHERS!

AS THEY HEARD THE ROARING CRESCENDO OF THE JEEP'S ENGINE, THE GERMANS RUSHED OUT AND OPENED FIRE. BUT THEY WERE TOO LATE TO STOP PETER'S DETERMINED DEPARTURE.

ACHTUNG,
ENGLANDERS!
STOP THEM!



THE MAIN PART OF THE GLIDER FORCE HAD MET WITH ILL-LUCK. THEY HAD LANDED RIGHT ALONGSIDE A GERMAN FIELD BATTERY AND HAD ALREADY SUFFERED HEAVY CASUALTIES FROM LANDING - CRASHES AND THE GERMAN OPPOSITION.



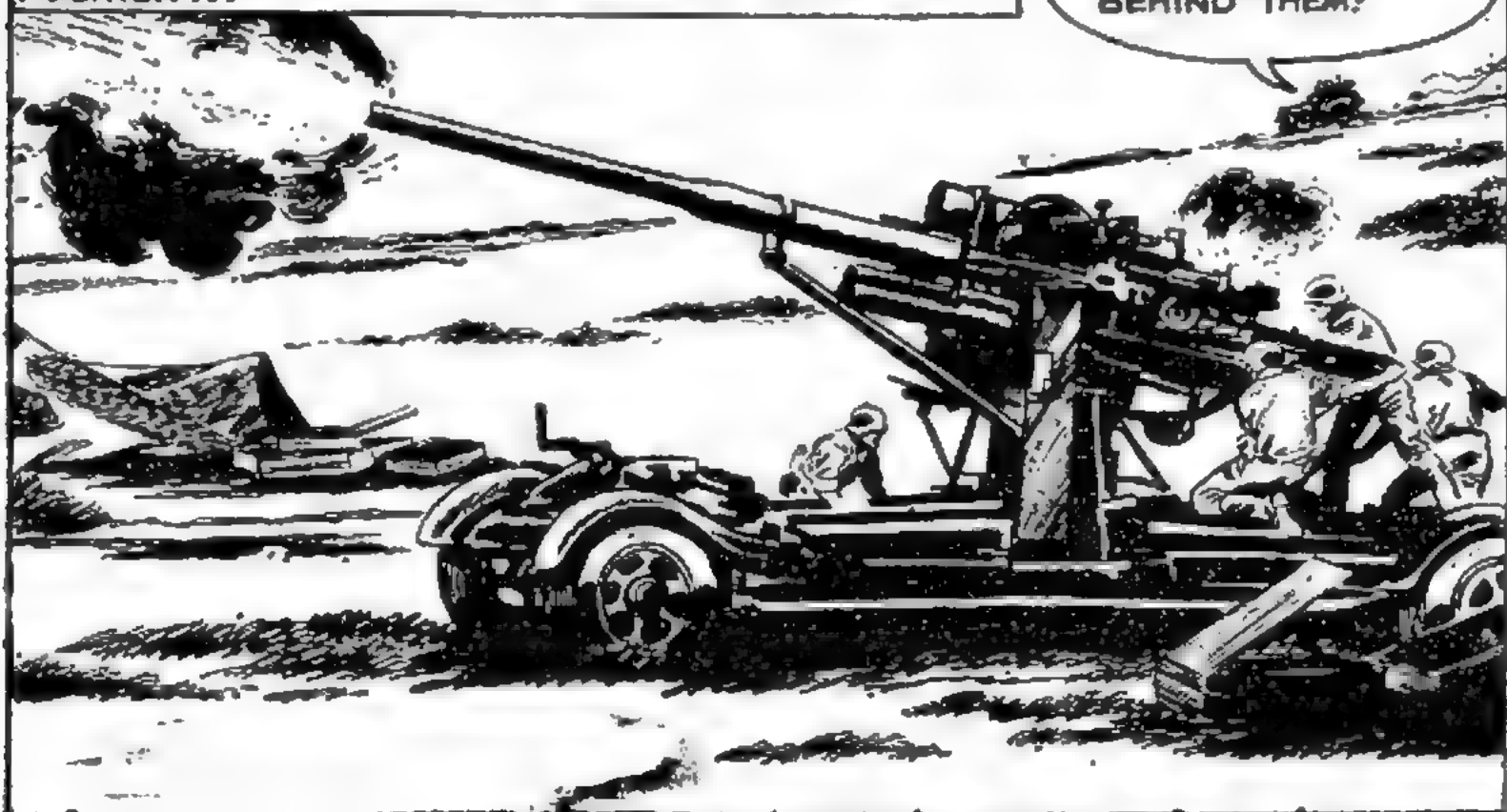
THE JERRIES
ARE BRINGING UP
REINFORCEMENTS...
WE'LL NEVER BREAK
OUT OF THE
PERIMETER.

THE GERMANS HAD ALREADY BROUGHT INTO ACTION A NUMBER OF THEIR DEADLY MOBILE EIGHTY-EIGHTS, WITH WHICH THEY WERE WREAKING HAVOC AMONG THE HARD PRESSED BRITISH TROOPS. . .



PETER'S JEEP CAME HURLING ALONG A ROAD HEADING TOWARDS THE MAIN LANDING ZONE. SUDDENLY ITS STARTLED PASSENGERS FOUND THEMSELVES CLOSE BEHIND A GERMAN ARTILLERY POSITION ...

JUPITER! JERRY EIGHTY-EIGHTS - AND WE'RE RIGHT BEHIND THEM!



THE MAJOR MADE A SPLIT-SECOND DECISION. ALMOST IMMEDIATELY HIS MEN HAD LEAPT FROM THE JEEP AND WERE CREEPING UP BEHIND THE NEAREST GUN.



COVER US WITH THE PIAT...WHEN WE'RE NEAR ENOUGH, WE'RE GOING IN WITH THE BAYONET.

THE SUDDEN ATTACK FROM THE REAR TOOK THE GERMAN CREW COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE.

AAAGH...!

AAAAA....!



SECONDS LATER, PETER WARNFORD'S UNIT HAD CONTROL OF THE GUN...

QUICK! HELP ME TRAVERSE THE GUN!



WITH DESPERATE SPEED PETER AND HIS MEN SWUNG THE GUN ROUND TO FACE THE REST OF THE GERMAN BATTERY, RELOADING AS THEY WORKED...



AIMED OVER OPEN SIGHTS, THE CAPTURED GUN BEGAN TO SOW ITS DESTRUCTION AMONG THE OTHER GUNS OF THE BATTERY...



BUT THEIR GALLANT STAND COULD NOT LAST FOR LONG. ALL THE GERMAN ARTILLERY IN THE VICINITY CONCENTRATED THEIR FIRE ON PETER'S PIRATE CREW.



IT WAS PETER WARNFORD'S BOLD ACTION THAT PROVED THE TURNING POINT FOR THE AIRBORNE FORCES. WITH SOME OF THE GERMAN GUNS OUT OF ACTION, THEY BROKE DESPERATELY OUT FROM THEIR CONFINED PERIMETER.



AT LAST, THE BRITISH HAD OVER-RUN ALL THE GERMAN POSITIONS... BUT PETER HIMSELF HAD BEEN WOUNDED AGAIN. THEY FOUND HIM BEHIND THE GUN HE HAD CAPTURED - THE ONLY SURVIVOR NOW FROM HIS SMALL UNIT...

WE'VE OVER-RUN
THE WHOLE
BATTERY!

GLAD WE'VE FOUND
YOU ALIVE, WARNFORD!
BUT I'M DASHED SORRY
THE REST OF YOUR
MEN ARE DEAD.



THAT EVENING, THE GROUND FORCES ADVANCED TO RELIEVE THEM. PETER WARNFORD WAS THE HERO OF THE HOUR.



Chapter 4. *Escape!*

THE GLIDER PILOTS RETURNED TO ENGLAND TO RE-FORM FOR FURTHER AIRBORNE OPERATIONS. PETER WARNFORD WAS GIVEN THE D.S.O., AND WAS PROMOTED TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL.



BUT THERE WAS NO ONE TO TELL OF HIS OBSTINATE REFUSAL TO RESCUE FROM CAPTIVITY THE CREW OF HIS OWN TUG.

UNKNOWN TO PETER WARNFORD, ONE SUCH MAN WAS EVENTUALLY TO RETURN. SQUADRON LEADER BARRY PLUMMET, BEING TAKEN TO A PRISONER OF WAR CAMP, JUMPED FROM THE BACK OF A LORRY.

A black and white illustration showing a man in a military uniform jumping from the back of a lorry. He is in mid-air, with his arms outstretched. A guard in uniform is lying on the ground in front of him, seemingly unconscious. The lorry is partially visible in the background.

I'LL TAKE MY CHANCE WHILE THE GUARD'S DOZING.

HELPED BY BRAVE MEMBERS OF THE FRENCH RESISTANCE, BARRY WAS PASSED ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN SECRET, HIS JOURNEY A TREMENDOUS RISK TO ALL WHO CAME IN TOUCH WITH HIM.



EVENTUALLY, AFTER MANY MONTHS, HE WAS SHIPPED AWAY ON A SMALL SAILING VESSEL, BY WAY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN AND GIBRALTAR.



BY THE TIME BARRY ARRIVED BACK IN ENGLAND, THE WAR IN EUROPE HAD MOVED ON. THE ALLIED ARMIES WERE ADVANCING INTO BELGIUM AND HOLLAND.



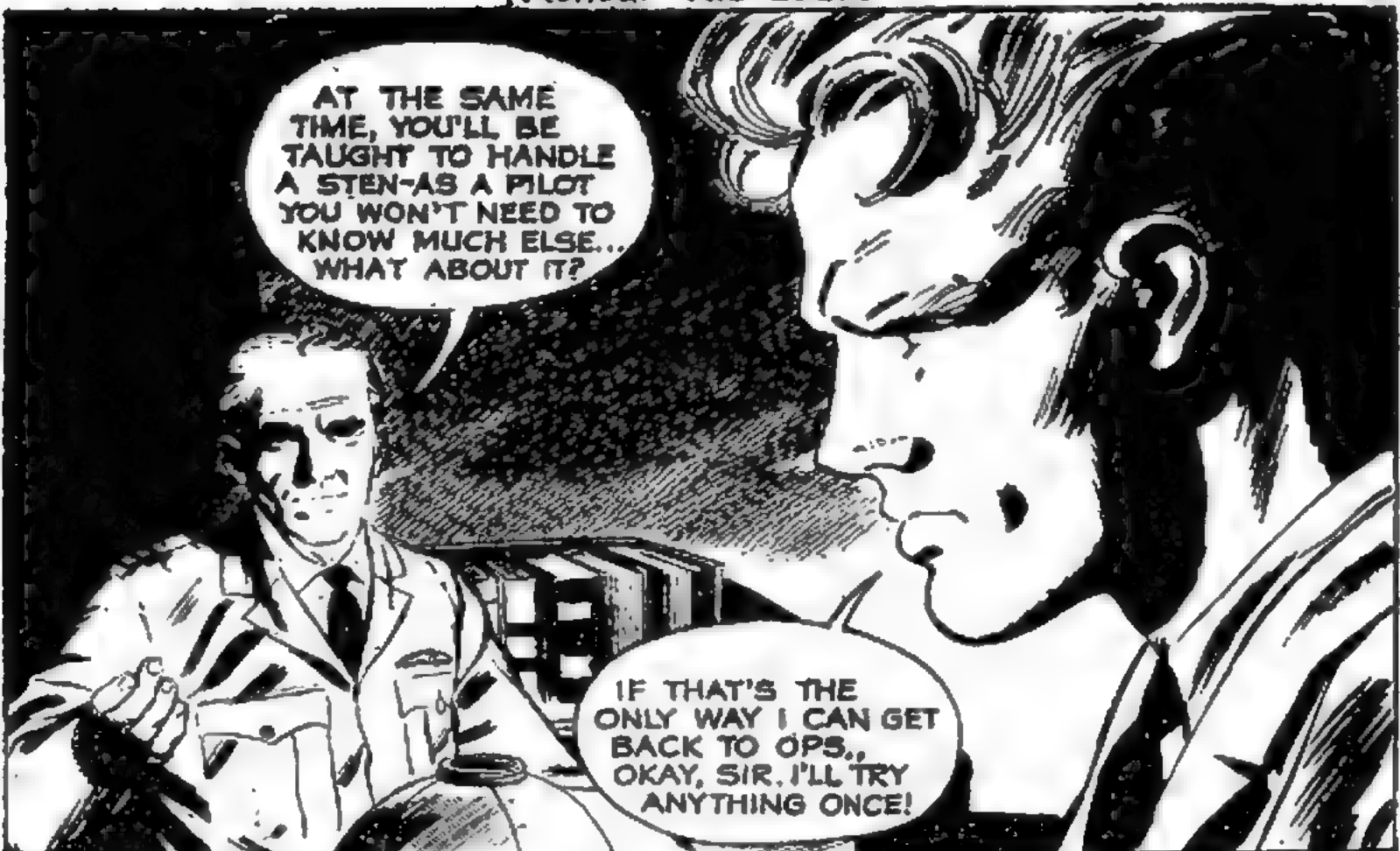
THE GLORIOUS BUT TRAGIC BATTLE OF ARNHEM HAD BEEN FOUGHT.



IN THE SMALL DUTCH TOWN SO MANY OF THE HIGHLY- TRAINED ARMY GLIDER PILOTS HAD BEEN LOST, AS CASUALTIES OR PRISONERS OF WAR.

ALL THESE THINGS HAD HAPPENED BY THE TIME BARRY REPORTED BACK TO ASK FOR A NEW POSTING. . .




A man in a military uniform, likely a sergeant or instructor, is speaking to a young man. The man in uniform is on the left, gesturing with his hand. The young man is on the right, looking at him. The background shows a building and some foliage.

AT THE SAME TIME, YOU'LL BE TAUGHT TO HANDLE A STEN-AS A PILOT YOU WON'T NEED TO KNOW MUCH ELSE... WHAT ABOUT IT?

IF THAT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN GET BACK TO OPS., OKAY, SIR. I'LL TRY ANYTHING ONCE!

SO BARRY PLUMMET TOOK A HURRIED CONVERSION COURSE TO GLIDERS - AND WAS GIVEN SOME BASIC TRAINING IN THE HANDLING OF SMALL ARMS.

Barry Plummet is in the foreground, holding a Sten gun. He is looking towards the right. In the background, there are several gliders and a building. A man in a military uniform is standing next to him, looking at the gliders.

WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT I'D BECOME A 'KHAKE' TYPE'... STILL, MIGHT AS WELL LEARN THE JOB PROPERLY.

EVENTUALLY, BARRY RECEIVED HIS POSTING TO ONE OF THE WINGS OF THE GLIDER PILOT REGIMENT.



TO HIS SHOCKED SURPRISE, BARRY FOUND THAT HIS NEW C.O. WAS NONE OTHER THAN LIEUTENANT-COLONEL PETER WARNFORD, D.S.O.! THE TWO MEN STARED AT EACH OTHER FOR A MOMENT...



PETER'S WELCOME TO THE RETURNED PRISONER-OF-WAR WAS HARDLY CORDIAL...

I CAN'T SAY I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU, PLUMMET. THE LAST THING I WANT IS AIR FORCE TYPES PLAYING AT SOLDIERS. UNDERSTAND YOU'RE UNDER MILITARY DISCIPLINE NOW!

BUT THERE WAS LITTLE TIME FOR THEIR PERSONAL QUARREL TO DEVELOP BEFORE THEY WENT INTO ACTION.

IT'S THE CROSSING OF THE RHINE! YOU'LL BE LANDED IN FAIRLY SMALL TACTICAL GROUPS...

THE TASKS ALLOCATED TO PETER WARNFORD'S WING WERE EXPLAINED ON A HUGE WALL MAP.



THE FLAK BATTERY IS THE LEAST IMPORTANT PART OF THE JOB—I'LL LEAVE THAT TO PLUMMET.

Chapter 5. *Together They Stand*

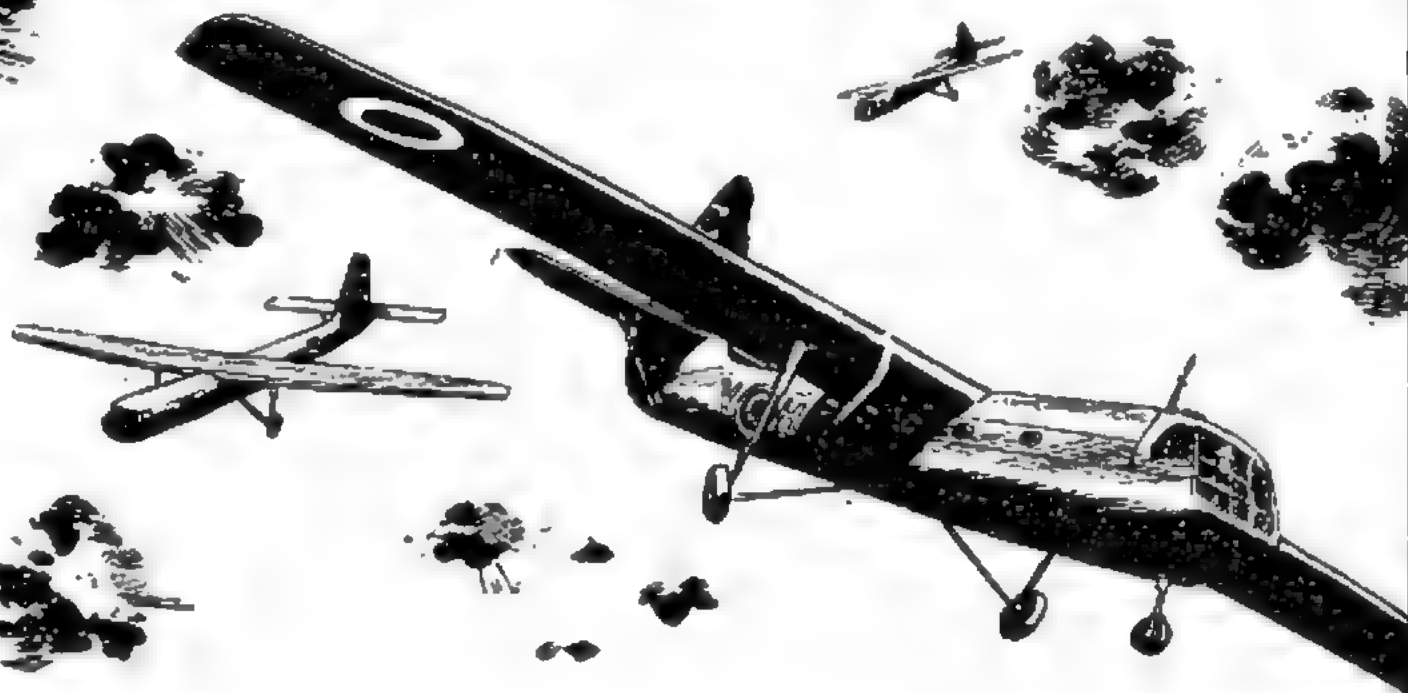
THE AIR ARMADA SET OUT ON ITS JOURNEY. BUT AS THEY NEARED THE LANDING-ZONE, THE FLAK WAS PROVING A MENACE TO THE SLOW-FLYING AIRCRAFT...



THE GERMAN GUNNERS WERE BRINGING DOWN THE CUMBERSOME GLIDERS ONE AFTER ANOTHER...



BARRY PLUMMET WAS ONLY TOO FAMILIAR WITH THE TERRIFYING FLAK BURSTS... HE PUT HIS GLIDER INTO A STEEP DIVE, AND THE OTHER PILOTS OF HIS SQUADRON FOLLOWED.




WHEN BARRY LEVELLED OUT NEAR THE GROUND, HIS GLIDER HAD GAINED AN ALARMING SPEED. BUT THE VICIOUS BALLS OF FLAK WERE STILL BURSTING ROUND THE HORSAS.

OVER A HUNDRED
MILES PER HOUR,
SIR - WELL OVER
LANDING SPEED!

THIS CRATE
FLIES LIKE A
BRICK... I'LL
TRY HALF FLAPS!



BARRY KNEW DESPERATE MEASURES WERE NEEDED. THE GLIDER ITSELF WAS UNARMED, SO HE DECIDED TO TRY SOMETHING WHICH HAD NOT BEEN IN THE TEXTBOOK OF GLIDER FLYING.



THIS IS WHERE WE NEED A FRONT GUNNER. SERGEANT! BASH OPEN THE WINDSCREEN AND USE YOUR STEN ON THE FLAK CREWS...

OKAY, SIR!

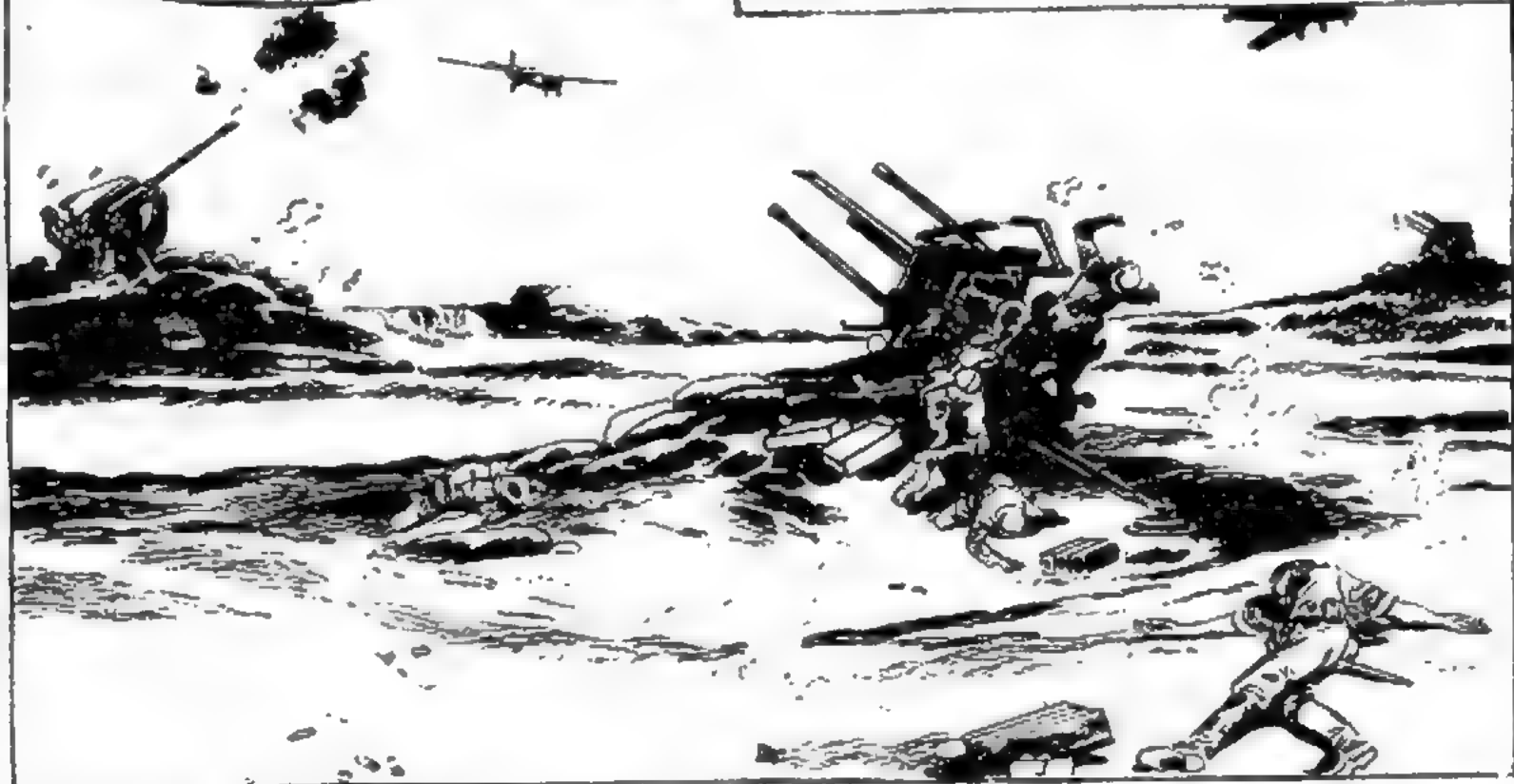
NEXT MOMENT, BARRY'S GLIDER WAS SWEEPING OVER THE HEADS OF THE CREW OF ONE OF THE GUNS, HIS CO-PILOT'S STEN SPRAYING DEATH AMONG THE FLABBERGASTED GERMANS.



BANG ON! GOOD SHOOTING, SERGEANT!

WE'VE PRANGED THEM! THEY DIDN'T EXPECT THAT!

THE OTHER PILOTS OF BARRY'S SQUADRON SAW WHAT HE WAS DOING AND DIVED OVER THE GUNS AFTER HIM... THE GERMAN GUNNERS WERE RAKED WITH STEN FIRE.



BARRY'S DETACHMENT CRASH-LANDED THEIR GLIDERS JUST BEYOND THE FLAK BATTERY... GRINDING TO A HALT AT SUCH A SPEED, THAT THE BRITISH TROOPS SUFFERED A FURTHER TOLL OF CASUALTIES...

COME ON, CUT YOUR WAY OUT! LET'S GET AT THE JERRIES, BEFORE THEY RECOVER!



STAGGERING FROM THE SPLINTERED WRECKAGE OF HIS GLIDER, BARRY PLUMMET FOUND HIMSELF THE SENIOR OFFICER OF THE SURVIVORS. WITHOUT PAUSING A SECOND, HE LED HIS MEN TOWARDS THE NEAREST GUN POSITION - WITH STENS BLAZING.




IN TWO DESPERATE MINUTES, THE FIRST GUN WAS TAKEN. STRAIGHT AWAY, BARRY BEGAN RE-DIRECTING THE VICIOUS FIRE OF HIS MEN ON TO THE OTHER GERMAN GUN PITS...



THE PIATS CRASHED OUT IN UNISON AND STENS CHATTERED SPITEFULLY. SOON, BESIDE THE SHATTERED GUNS OF THE FLAK BATTERY, THE GERMANS RAISED THEIR ARMS IN SURRENDER...




BUT BEFORE BARRY'S MEN HAD PUT THE FLAK OUT OF ACTION - THE GLIDERS OF THE MAIN FORCE HAD SUFFERED HEAVILY.

An aerial view of a glider battle. Several gliders are shown in various stages of destruction or being hit by enemy fire. Black smoke and fire trails are visible in the sky. The ground below is a flat, open landscape.

WE'LL NEVER GET THROUGH THIS! THE GUNNERS ARE JUST PICKING US OFF!

PETER WARNFORD MOMENTARILY LOST HIS NERVE. AS A SOLDIER, HE WAS NOT USED TO THE FLAMING HORRORS OF FLAK... THE APPROACHING GROUND BECAME A BLUR TO HIM, AND HIS HANDS WAVED ON THE CONTROLS. . .

A close-up view of two soldiers inside a glider. They are wearing helmets and flight suits. The soldier on the left is looking down at a control panel, while the soldier on the right is looking forward with a concerned expression.

YOU'RE OFF COURSE, SIR! I DON'T RECOGNISE THIS AREA AT ALL!

I KNOW, I KNOW, MAN... I CAN'T MAKE ANYTHING OUT EITHER!

ABOARD PETER'S GLIDER WAS THE BRIGADIER IN CHARGE OF THE LANDING - FORCE, HE WAS RAGING AS HE STEPPED FROM THE GLIDER...



THE BRIGADIER'S DAMAGED RADIO WAS CAUSING CONFUSION THROUGHOUT THE LANDING FORCE, AS OTHER GLIDER PARTIES BEGAN TRYING TO LOCATE THEIR HEADQUARTERS.



BACK AT THE CAPTURED FLAK BATTERY, BARRY PLUMMET HAD ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF HIS PRISONERS. BUT HIS JOB WAS NOT YET OVER...



SWIFTLY AND SILENTLY, BARRY LED HIS UNIT UP THE HILL TO OUTFLANK THE GUN BATTERY WHICH WAS TO BE THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE AIRBORNE TROOPS.

I'VE GOT TO SHOW THESE KHAKI-TYPES THAT I CAN PLAY SOLDIERS AS WELL... WE'LL WORK UP THE SIDE OF THE HILL.

HE HAD TO WORK WITH HIS IMAGINATION AND COMMON-SENSE... BUT, UNKNOWINGLY, HE HAD THE NATURAL INSTINCTS OF A BORN SOLDIER...

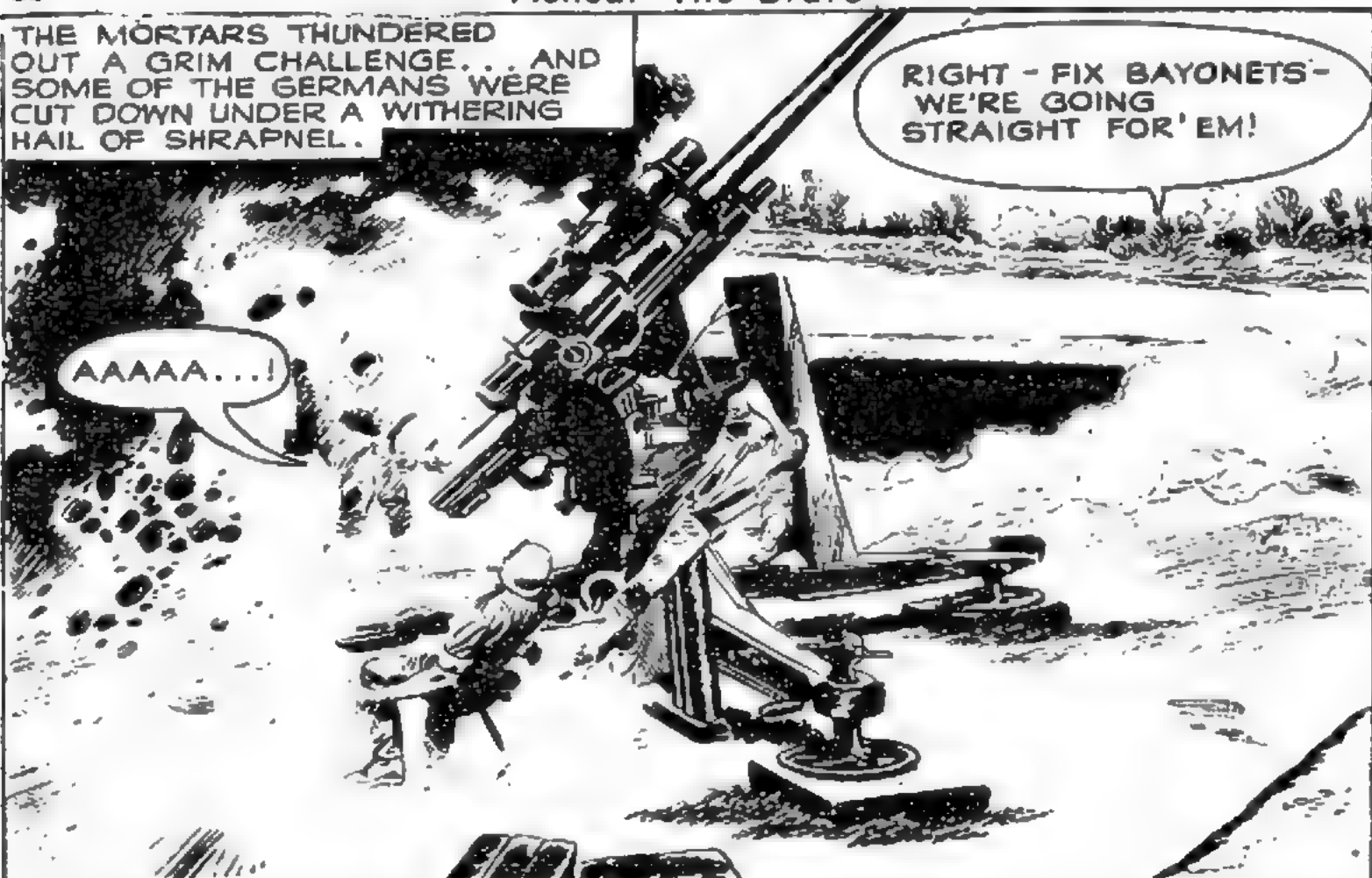
DIRECT MORTAR FIRE ON TO THE FIRST GUN-EMPLACEMENT.

OKAY, SIR...

THE MORTARS THUNDERED OUT A GRIM CHALLENGE... AND SOME OF THE GERMANS WERE CUT DOWN UNDER A WITHERING HAIL OF SHRAPNEL.

RIGHT - FIX BAYONETS - WE'RE GOING STRAIGHT FOR 'EM!

AAAAA...!



WITH A YELL, BARRY LEAPT TO HIS FEET AND WAVED HIS MEN FORWARD.

UP AND AT 'EM, LADS! CHARGE!



THE SURVIVING GUNNERS STILL FOUGHT ON GRIMLY AND LAID DOWN A HEAVY CURTAIN OF FIRE IN FRONT OF THEIR POSITION. BARRY'S MEN FOUND IT HARD GOING, BUT WERE SPURRED ON BY THE INSPIRATION OF THEIR LEADER...



BY THE SHEER BRASH AUDACITY OF THEIR TACTICS, BARRY'S SMALL BAND FORCED THEIR WAY INTO THE FIRST OF THE GUN EMPLACEMENTS... BUT THEY COULD GO NO FARTHER.



FROM THIS FIRST CAPTURED POSITION, THE BRITISH GLIDER TROOPS COULD CONTINUE TO RAKE THE OTHER GERMAN GUNS OF THE BATTERY WITH HARASSING CLOSE-QUARTER FIRE...



BARRY KNEW THAT THEIR OWN POSITION WAS DESPERATE.

WE'VE DONE A GOOD JOB, SIR - BUT WE'RE OUTNUMBERED AND LOSING MORE MEN. IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE WE'RE EITHER COUNTER-ATTACKED - OR WIPED OUT PIECEMEAL.

I KNOW, SERGEANT... WE'VE GOT TO THINK WHAT OUGHT TO BE DONE WITH THE WOUNDED.



FOR A MOMENT, THE PILOT WAS TEMPTED TO SURRENDER... BUT HE THOUGHT BETTER OF IT.

WE'VE GOT SOME SMOKE - BOMBS LEFT, SIR.

GOOD, SLING THEM OVER. GET THE WOUNDED AWAY WHILE THE SMOKE'S GIVING US COVER...




WHILE THE THICK SMOKE SHROUDED THE GUN-PIT, THE WOUNDED WERE SHIFTED BACK. BARRY AND A HANDFUL OF MEN STAYED TO KEEP UP COVERING FIRE...



AT LAST, THE WOUNDED HAD REACHED THE COMPARATIVE SAFETY OF A THICK WOOD...



FEW MEN WERE LEFT WITH BARRY IN THE SHAMBLES OF THE GUN-EMPLACEMENT... STREAKS OF FLAME FROM THEIR GUN-MUZZLES CUT THROUGH THE CURLING FINGERS OF THE THICK SMOKE-SCREEN...



THEY'VE ALL GOT AWAY, SIR! BUT WE'RE RUNNING SHORT OF AMMO.


RIGHT, CLEAR OFF THE REST OF YOU, AND LEAVE ME THE SPARE MAGAZINES.

FOR A MOMENT, THE SERGEANT HESITATED... THEN HE SAW A PATCH OF BLOOD ON THE OFFICER'S LEG...

YOU'RE WOUNDED YOURSELF, SIR... I'M EITHER TAKING YOU OUT MYSELF OR STAYING WITH YOU.


DO AS YOU'RE TOLD, SERGEANT!

BOTH BARRY AND THE SERGEANT KNEW THAT HIS WOUND WAS TOO BAD TO ALLOW HIM TO WALK... AND THE PILOT WAS DETERMINED NOT TO SLOW DOWN HIS MEN AND INCREASE THEIR DANGER...



GET A MOVE ON, SERGEANT! YOU'RE IN THE ARMY. YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT DISCIPLINE. SHOVE OFF — THAT'S AN ORDER!

THIS WAS A MOMENT OF TRUTH FOR BARRY PLUMMET — A MOMENT OF DESPERATE, BITTER TRUTH.



I ONCE CALLED WARNFORD A CLUELESS BRUISER. NOW I KNOW — YOU HAVE TO BE IF YOU CARRY AUTHORITY IN THESE CONDITIONS.

WRACKED BY THE PAIN OF HIS WOUNDS, BARRY KEPT FIRING HIS STEN AT THE GERMAN POSITIONS, WHILE THE SERGEANT, AND THE REST OF HIS MEN DISAPPEARED INTO THE SWIRLING SMOKE BEHIND HIM...



SIX MAGAZINES OF AMMO. WONDER HOW LONG I CAN HOLD THEM OFF?

AS BARRY SLAMMED ANOTHER MAGAZINE INTO HIS STEN, HE SAW THAT THE SMOKE-SCREEN WAS THINNING FAST...

THE SMOKE'S DRIFTING CLEAR— BUT I CAN HARDLY STAND NOW, ANYWAY...



HE BEGAN TO CRAWL FROM PLACE TO PLACE AMONG THE FALLEN, FIRING ONE ROUND FROM EACH POSITION—AND GROWING WEAKER EVERY SECOND.

IF I KEEP MOVING ABOUT, THE JERRIES WILL THINK THERE ARE STILL A FEW OF US LEFT... IT MIGHT KEEP THEM OCCUPIED A LITTLE LONGER.



BY THIS TIME, THE MAIN BRITISH GLIDER - BORNE FORCE HAD GOT TOGETHER AND WERE AT LAST APPROACHING THE HARASSED GERMAN BATTERY.



THE NEWCOMERS WERE THE WOUNDED SURVIVORS OF BARRY'S BRAVE LITTLE FORCE. THEIR SERGEANT TOLD THE BRIGADIER OF THE SQUADRON LEADER'S GALLANTRY AND SELF-SACRIFICE.




LIEUTENANT-COLONEL PETER WARNFORD, STANDING CLOSE BY, HEARD THE BRIGADIER GIVE HIS ORDERS FOR THE OPENING OF THE FINAL ATTACK ON THE BATTERY.




PETER WARNFORD WAS STRICKEN WITH REMORSE, BITTERLY REGRETTING HIS LONG STUPID QUARREL WITH THE R.A.F. MAN WHO HAD PROVED HIMSELF SO GALLANTLY.





IN FACT, PLUMMET
IS A BETTER SOLDIER
THAN I. HE'S PREPARED
TO SACRIFICE HIMSELF
FOR THE SAKE OF HIS
MEN. I LET HIM DOWN
ONCE BEFORE... IT'S
UP TO ME TO TRY TO
SAVE HIM NOW —
IF HE IS STILL
ALIVE.

PETER PUT HIS SUGGESTION TO THE BRIGADIER.



ONE MAN MIGHT
GET THROUGH, WHERE
MORE WOULDN'T.
JUST GIVE ME FIVE
MINUTES TO TRY
TO RESCUE
PLUMMET, SIR!

VERY WELL... WE'LL LAY
DOWN NOTHING BUT
SMOKE FOR FIVE MINUTES
... BUT AFTER THAT OUR
BARRAGE MUST BEGIN,
WHATEVER HAPPENS...
GOOD LUCK!

SO PETER WARNFORD SET OUT INTO THE NO MAN'S LAND OF SWIRLING SMOKE AND FLASHING GUN MUZZLES, TOWARDS THE GERMAN BATTERY...



AT LAST PETER REACHED THE POSITION WHERE BARRY'S TROOPS HAD MADE THEIR GALLANT STAND. HE SCRAMBLED DOWN INTO THAT SCENE OF CARNAGE, MUTE EVIDENCE OF THE HEROIC FIGHTING WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE. THERE HE FOUND BARRY ALREADY WEAK FROM HIS WOUNDS.




BUT JUST AS PETER HAD FINISHED BANDAGING BARRY'S WOUNDS, THE FIRST OF THE BRITISH SHRAPNEL SHELLS EXPLODED CLOSE BY...



WHAT'S THAT?
ARE THE JERRIES
COUNTER-
ATTACKING?

NO! THAT'S OUR OWN
BARRAGE.... WE'VE GOT TO
GET OUT OF HERE QUICK OR
WE'LL BE BLOWN SKY-HIGH!

PETER KNEW THAT TO STAY A MOMENT LONGER
MEANT CERTAIN DEATH FOR BOTH OF THEM, BUT
THERE WAS STILL JUST A CHANCE IF
THEY MOVED FAST... SWIFTLY HIS
STRONG ARMS LIFTED THE WOUNDED
AIRMAN IN A FIREMAN'S LIFT.



I'M GOING TO
RUN FOR IT. IT'S
THE ONLY CHANCE
WE'VE GOT NOW.

Honour The Brave



WITH THE WEIGHT OF HIS ONE-TIME ENEMY ACROSS HIS SHOULDERS, PETER SET OFF IN A STAGGERING, SWAYING RUN BACK TO THE BRITISH POSITIONS...

NOT MUCH FARTHER NOW... MUST KEEP GOING...



CALLING UPON HIS LAST RESERVES OF STRENGTH, PETER AT LAST REACHED THE SAFETY OF THE BRITISH POSITION. GENTLY, HE LAY THE WOUNDED AIRMAN ON THE GROUND. GONE WAS THE HATE HE HAD FELT FOR BARRY...

THANKS, I OWE YOU MY LIFE!

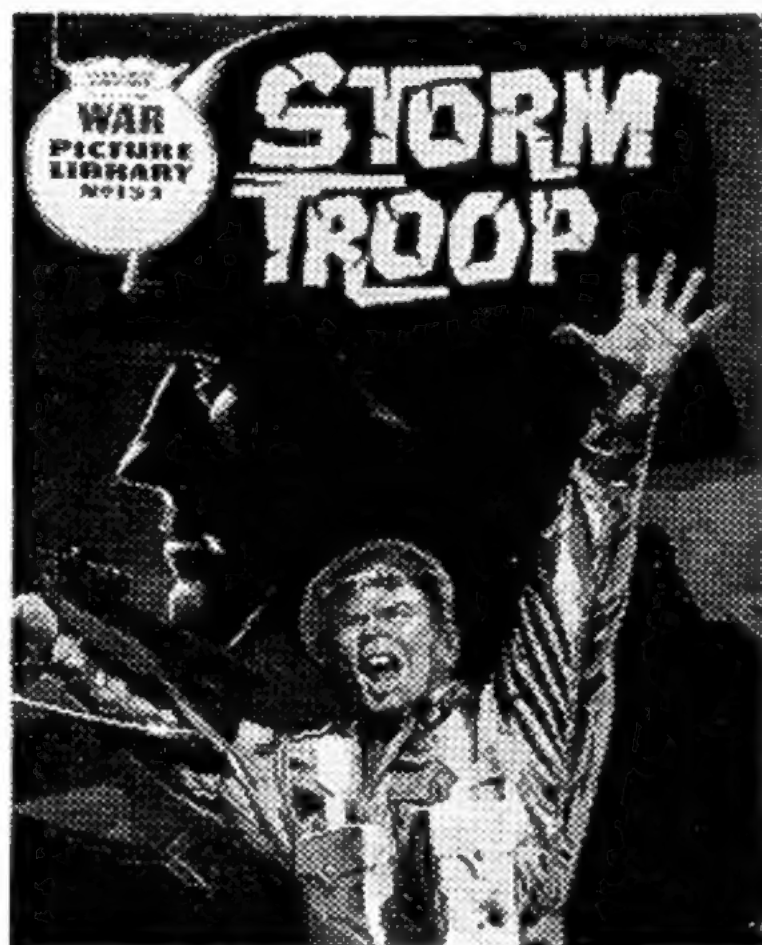
BUT I OWE YOU A GREAT DEAL MORE, OLD FELLOW. YOU'VE SHOWN ME THAT THE SERVICES MUST CO-OPERATE IF WE ARE TO WIN THIS WAR. FROM NOW ON, WE FIGHT... TOGETHER!

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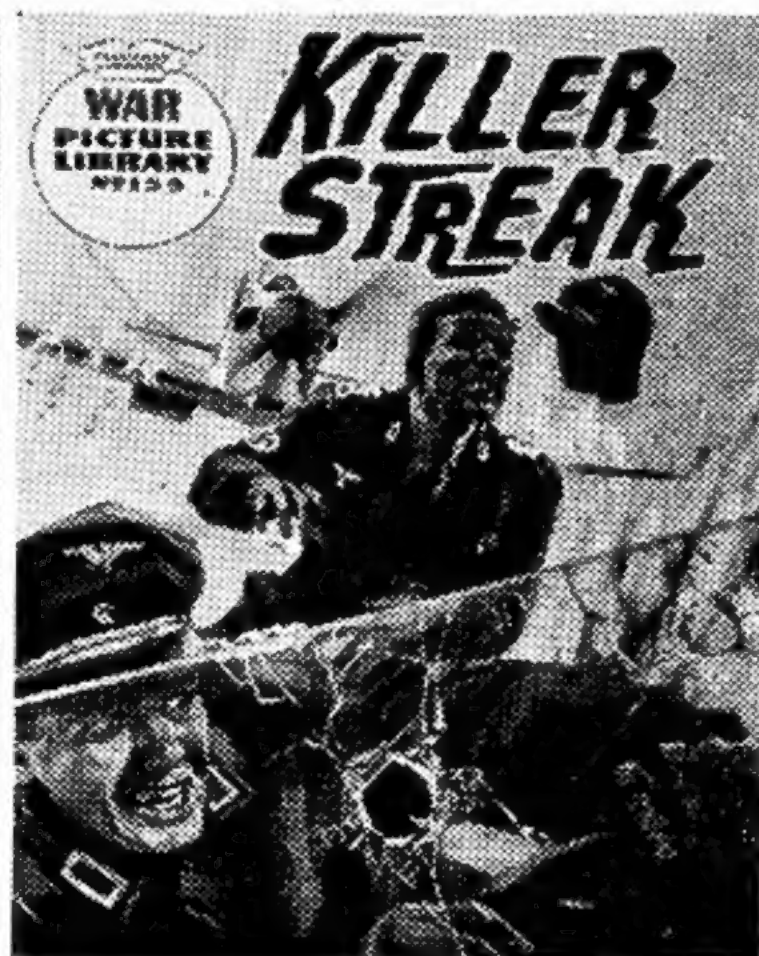
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